

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS

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CIA/WILLIAM  
CASEY

BROKAW: President Reagan took advantage of a perfect opportunity to give his controversial CIA director a big vote of confidence today. The president showed up at a ground-breaking for an addition to the agency's headquarters in Langley, Va., and Bill Casey was there. Chris Wallace tonight on the president's praise and the agency's plan.

WALLACE: The president today stood by the embattled CIA and it's even more embattled director, flying to the agency headquarters in Virginia to a ceremony. Before Mr. Reagan arrived, Casey indicated he had not yet read a House report that concludes he obtained Carter campaign materials for the 1980 Reagan campaign. He clearly didn't want to discuss it. WILLIAM CASEY (CIA director):

However, I'll probably make a statement later.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Today? CASEY: Probably.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Are you gonna stay in your job, sir? CASEY: I don't want to talk about it, Mike. (sic)

WALLACE: Casey may not have been talking, but the president was. Mr. Reagan called agency employees heroes, and he seemed to answer critics of CIA covert operations in Nicaragua. PRESIDENT REAGAN: You remain the eyes and ears of the free world. You are the trip wire over which the totalitarian rule must stumble in their quest for global domination.

WALLACE: The president also praised Casey, saying his reform of the CIA has been 'breathhtaking.' REAGAN: Your work, the work of your director, the other top officials, have (sic) been an inspiration to your fellow Americans and to people everywhere.

WALLACE: The president never mentioned the House report on the 1980 campaign. Later the CIA said Casey won't have a statement today, and may not ever. Top White House officials say their early judgement is that the House report is not hurting them politically. They predict the president will keep Casey and keep fighting appointment of a special prosecutor. Chris Wallace, NBC News at the White House.